GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:384
ANSWERED ON:14.12.2016
Redressal of Grievances of Mobile Customers
Singh Shri Sushil Kumar

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the mechanism in place to redress the grievances of mobile customers by service providers and Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI);

(b) whether the mobile operators are charging for calling the customer care and if so, the details thereof and the number of complaints received in this regard;

(c) the action taken by the Government against such mobile service providers including the penalties imposed in this regard; and

(d) whether the Government has taken action against telecom service providers who falsely advertise talk time plans and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE (IC) OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS &
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI MANOJ SINHA)

(a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (d) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.384 FOR 14TH DECEMBER, 2016 REGARDING "REDRESSAL OF GRIEVANCES OF MOBILE CUSTOMERS".

(a) to (c) As per provisions of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) Act, 1997, TRAI has laid down the framework for redressal of complaints by Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) through "The Telecom Consumer Complaint Redressal Regulations, 2012." These regulations provide for a two tier complaint redressal mechanism viz. Complaint Centre and Appellate Authority. The complaint centre shall have a toll free consumer care number for lodging complaints and service requests. The TSPs can also have a general information number at its complaint centre for information/enquiry. The IVRS (Interactive Voice Response System) access on this number is free but the TSPs can charge nominal tariff for speaking to consumer care agent. The consumers can also lodge appeal with the Appellate Authority through the toll free consumer care number.

In accordance with these regulations, the service providers have established toll free consumer care number for complaints and services. Some of the service providers have also established separate 'General Information Number' for information / query.

In addition to the above, the customers can also register their grievances through Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) portal of Government of India.

The TRAI Act, 1997 does not envisage handling of individual consumer complaints by TRAI. As such, the complaints received in TRAI are forwarded to the concerned TSPs for taking appropriate action. Similarly, the complaints received through CPGRAMS portal are also handled by the concerned TSPs under the existing framework of redressal of grievances.

No instance of charging for calling the Consumer Care Number has come to the notice of TRAI.

(d) As per TRAI Act, 1997, TRAI notifies the rate at which telecom services are to be provided. The present tariff regulatory regime for mobile services is based on the principles of forbearance, which allows flexibility to all the market players to decide various tariff plans/products for different service areas of their operation. Tariffs can therefore be offered by service providers to counter the competitive tariffs of their competitors or any other prevailing market conditions. However, the TSPs are required to file the tariff plans offered to their customers before TRAI within one week of such offer. TRAI keeps a close watch on the telecom tariffs being offered in the market and intervenes, if required, to ensure that the regulatory principles/orders/regulations/guidelines are being met.

TRAI has issued a Direction dated 26.03.2012, prohibiting misleading tariff advertisements which is available on TRAI website www.trai.gov.in.

Even the instances of levy of excess charges vis-Ã -vis the tariff offered are being monitored by TRAI through the Metering and Billing Audit. Telecom service providers are made to refund the excess charges and also there are provisions for levy of financial disincentives not exceeding the amount of excess charges levied from customers.

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